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ABSTRACT

In an effort to predict the academic performance of their students, the counseling staff at Montgomery College (Maryland) administered the Brown and Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) to 210 freshmen students. The findings of the SSHA indicate that the majority of entering freshmen at Montgomery College do not know efficient study methods, may not have sufficient motivation for studying and may not have attitudes found to be important in the classroom. Multiple regression analysis showed a significant relationship between high school rank and GPA, but suggests that the SSHA is not an effective predictor of GPA or persistence for students at Montgomery College. Four recommendations were presented to improve student academic performance: (1) counselors should encourage students to enroll in study skills classes, (2) students not enrolled in these classes should take advantage of the services provided by the counseling staff, (3) students should be informed of books and materials available in the Student Services Building that could improve their study skills, (4) more of these books should be provided to the students and kept in a "Study Skills Library" in the Student Services Building. (RG)

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FRESHMEN STUDY HABITS

AND

ATTITUDES

A Study Conducted

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INFORMATION

FRESHMAN STUDY HABITS AND ATTITUDES
Stephen P. Barrilleaux

Some students with apparently high scholastic aptitude do very poorly in school, while others with only mediocre ability do well. This discrepancy between aptitude for school performance and actual performance in school suggests that other factors either contribute or hinder a student's scholastic performance. The counseling staff at Montgomery College, Rockville, as counselors elsewhere, are looking for ways to predict the academic performance of their students, thus better enabling themselves to work with these students.

The Brown and Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) was developed to help study this problem. The SSHA is a self-report survey which measures a student's study methods, his motivation for studying and his attitudes toward scholastic activities which are considered important in the classroom. Research to date has shown the SSHA to be a useful predictor of an individual's academic achievement ($r=.35$). The SSHA has a low correlation with measures of scholastic aptitude. This indicates that the predictive power of the SSHA rests on its measurement of traits largely untouched by such instruments. High Study Orientation (SO) scores on the SSHA are characteristic of students who get high grades, while low SO scores tend to be associated with those who get low grades.

The SSHA was administered to a 10% random sample of full-time students enrolled in Freshman Seminar at Montgomery College, Rockville, in the Fall of 1971. The sample is made up of 73 females and 137 males; a total of 210 students.

Multiple Regression Analysis was used to study the degree of association between SO scores and academic performance, as measured by the student's first semester grade point average (GPA) and SO scores and persistence into

the second semester. The independent variables used in the analysis were high school rank, ACT composite scores, sex, and the SO scores from the SSHA.

Results: The analysis shows a significant relationship between high school rank and GPA ($r=.44$). This is not surprising since past performance is usually the best predictor of future success. The relationship between the first semester GPA and the other variables was not large enough to be of any value in counseling students. The relationship between the SSHA and GPA was very low for our sample and adds very little to the accuracy of predicting a student's grades. For our sample, GPA is the best predictor of persistence ($r=.397$). Of the variables considered, this is logical, since a student who has low grades would be more likely to leave school than a student with high grades. The SO score on the SSHA was the next best predictor of persistence, but adds so little to the multiple R that it serves no useful purpose to the counselor.

Of possible interest to the counselors at Montgomery College is the information included in the attached table. The mean score for freshmen on the SSHA is 114.2, with a standard deviation of 29.7. The freshmen sampled had a mean score of 90.08, with a standard deviation of 27.5. This mean score is 24 points below the mean for entering freshmen (norm group) and is at the 20th percentile for the norm group. Also, 85.7% of the males and 72.6% of the females sampled scored below the 50th percentile on the SSHA. Of the students below the 50th percentile, most lay in the bottom 20th percentile band, i.e., 41% of the females and 59% of the males sampled are at or below the 20th percentile on the SSHA.

Conclusions: The Multiple Regression Analysis suggests that the SSHA is not an effective predictor of GPA or persistence for students at Montgomery College, Rockville. However, the findings on the distribution of SO scores on

the SSHA can be useful to the counseling staff at M.C. These findings would indicate that the vast majority of the entering freshmen at Montgomery College, Rockville, do not know efficient study methods, may not have sufficient motivation for studying and may not have attitudes found to be important in the classroom. In other words, the students sampled have Study Habits and Attitudes which are characteristic of students who receive low grades in school.

Recommendations:

1) Students entering Montgomery College, Rockville, should be encouraged by their counselor to enroll in the study skills classes offered at the college.

2) Those who do not enroll in these classes should be given constant encouragement in the Freshmen Seminars to avail themselves of the services provided by the counseling staff.

3) The students should be made aware of the books and materials available to them in the Student Services Building that might aid them in improving their study skills.

4) More books and other materials having to do with study skills, reading, writing, etc., should be provided to the students. These could be kept in a "Study Skills Library" in the Student Services Building.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY ORIENTATION SCORES FOR ROCKVILLE FRESHMEN IN 1971

Percentile	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100	Total
Male	54	31	13	14	10	7	2	2	1	3	137
Female	20	10	13	5	5	7	8	1	2	2	73
Total	74	41	26	19	15	14	10	3	3	5	210

Mean - 90.08; s.d. - 27.5